

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,710

2
00:00:07,710 --> 00:00:08,430
Shall I start?

3
00:00:08,430 --> 00:00:12,090

4
00:00:12,090 --> 00:00:15,000
This is Ray Kaner from the
Center for Holocaust Studies,

5
00:00:15,000 --> 00:00:19,290
1609 Avenue J, Brooklyn,
interviewing Dr. George

6
00:00:19,290 --> 00:00:21,900
Tievsky, a liberator--

7
00:00:21,900 --> 00:00:24,900
a medical liberator of
concentration camp Dachau.

8
00:00:24,900 --> 00:00:27,625

9
00:00:27,625 --> 00:00:30,900
Doctor, could you tell me,
when you entered the army,

10
00:00:30,900 --> 00:00:33,060
did you enlist or
you were drafted,

11
00:00:33,060 --> 00:00:34,770
and your rank and
everything else

12
00:00:34,770 --> 00:00:37,020
pertaining to these questions?

13

00:00:37,020 --> 00:00:43,830

I volunteered immediately
following my internship

14

00:00:43,830 --> 00:00:49,800

in January of 1944.

15

00:00:49,800 --> 00:00:57,470

My service in Germany

I was in late '44.

16

00:00:57,470 --> 00:01:00,280

17

00:01:00,280 --> 00:01:02,940

I was a captain in
the Medical Corps

18

00:01:02,940 --> 00:01:08,940

attached to the 66th field
hospital of the 7th army.

19

00:01:08,940 --> 00:01:18,930

This is a mobile surgical unit,
and consisted of only 60 beds.

20

00:01:18,930 --> 00:01:21,970

We saw the most
critically wounded.

21

00:01:21,970 --> 00:01:24,480

We saw the most
terrible, terrible wounds

22

00:01:24,480 --> 00:01:28,950

that can be inflicted
during wartime.

23

00:01:28,950 --> 00:01:31,590

And we were with
the forward area.

24

00:01:31,590 --> 00:01:35,400

We, at the cessation
of hostilities,

25

00:01:35,400 --> 00:01:42,180

were near Munich in a
pleasant, green meadow.

26

00:01:42,180 --> 00:01:51,690

We were ordered
from there on May 2

27

00:01:51,690 --> 00:01:57,420

to proceed to the town of
Allach, which is near Dachau.

28

00:01:57,420 --> 00:02:01,130

29

00:02:01,130 --> 00:02:07,980

Our unit was ready within two
hours to receive patients.

30

00:02:07,980 --> 00:02:16,470

The reason for our sudden
order to go to Allach

31

00:02:16,470 --> 00:02:22,800

was because of a typhus
epidemic at Dachau.

32

00:02:22,800 --> 00:02:25,290

We were inundated.

33

00:02:25,290 --> 00:02:30,810

The unit had only 11 nurses
and about 13 physicians.

34

00:02:30,810 --> 00:02:35,000

35

00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:41,660

It was a subcamp of Allach--

36
00:02:41,660 --> 00:02:42,740
of Dachau, rather.

37
00:02:42,740 --> 00:02:45,620
Dachau was a complex.

38
00:02:45,620 --> 00:02:50,300
And patients were sent
directly from the main compound

39
00:02:50,300 --> 00:02:53,750
at Dachau to Allach.

40
00:02:53,750 --> 00:02:58,670
Could you tell me, describe your
feeling when you enter Dachau,

41
00:02:58,670 --> 00:03:01,550
seeing all these
injured soldiers

42
00:03:01,550 --> 00:03:05,510
that you took care of
while fighting in the war,

43
00:03:05,510 --> 00:03:09,560
seeing all what happened to
your friends, to the people

44
00:03:09,560 --> 00:03:12,510
you came from the United
States to the army,

45
00:03:12,510 --> 00:03:14,510
and after this,
you entered Dachau.

46
00:03:14,510 --> 00:03:19,100
What was your reaction to
see another way of dying?

47

00:03:19,100 --> 00:03:21,410

There was no comparison--

48

00:03:21,410 --> 00:03:23,720

no comparison.

49

00:03:23,720 --> 00:03:28,010

These were two different worlds.

50

00:03:28,010 --> 00:03:30,680

This was another world.

51

00:03:30,680 --> 00:03:33,170

This was another planet.

52

00:03:33,170 --> 00:03:40,100

I will read to you a

letter dated May 10, 1945,

53

00:03:40,100 --> 00:03:44,240

written to the girl back home

who was to become my wife.

54

00:03:44,240 --> 00:03:47,450

55

00:03:47,450 --> 00:03:50,990

"Today, I visited Dachau.

56

00:03:50,990 --> 00:03:55,490

It is, without a doubt,

the most loathsome place

57

00:03:55,490 --> 00:03:58,010

I have ever seen.

58

00:03:58,010 --> 00:04:03,950

One can feel death itself there

in its most repulsive form.

59

00:04:03,950 --> 00:04:08,720

There is something indescribably
horrible about the place.

60
00:04:08,720 --> 00:04:13,460
It is almost incredible to
think that human beings could

61
00:04:13,460 --> 00:04:16,610
systematically kill
other human beings

62
00:04:16,610 --> 00:04:21,320
by the hundreds of thousands
as if they were so much cattle.

63
00:04:21,320 --> 00:04:27,020
Until one sees something like
this with one's own eyes,

64
00:04:27,020 --> 00:04:30,650
there is a small
element of doubt.

65
00:04:30,650 --> 00:04:35,240
Because it is so very difficult
for us to conceive of anything

66
00:04:35,240 --> 00:04:37,660
like this.

67
00:04:37,660 --> 00:04:41,800
"But today, I saw
with my own eyes

68
00:04:41,800 --> 00:04:48,100
the pile of human dead stacked
like so many bundles of wheat.

69
00:04:48,100 --> 00:04:50,740
The piles were not
as high as yesterday,

70
00:04:50,740 --> 00:04:54,280

for the furnaces are
whittling them down.

71
00:04:54,280 --> 00:04:59,120
I saw the furnaces also, and men
stoking the furnaces with coal,

72
00:04:59,120 --> 00:05:02,740
so as to keep them hot
enough for cremation.

73
00:05:02,740 --> 00:05:07,000
One of the former prisoners
volunteered his services

74
00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:09,790
to show me about
the crematorium.

75
00:05:09,790 --> 00:05:13,330
I met him at the gas chambers.

76
00:05:13,330 --> 00:05:16,420
"These were at one end of
the long building which

77
00:05:16,420 --> 00:05:18,250
contained the furnaces.

78
00:05:18,250 --> 00:05:20,320
And there were about
eight or 10 of them,

79
00:05:20,320 --> 00:05:22,960
each holding a few persons.

80
00:05:22,960 --> 00:05:27,970
After death, the bodies were
then crated to the furnaces,

81
00:05:27,970 --> 00:05:31,330
or if they were too full,
to a small building where

82
00:05:31,330 --> 00:05:32,770
they were stored.

83
00:05:32,770 --> 00:05:36,670
At least they were supposed
to have been stored there.

84
00:05:36,670 --> 00:05:38,380
"When the Americans
first came, they

85
00:05:38,380 --> 00:05:41,230
found hundreds of bodies
piled on the ground

86
00:05:41,230 --> 00:05:44,470
outside the crematorium.

87
00:05:44,470 --> 00:05:49,570
The crematorium building
is enclosed by a high wall,

88
00:05:49,570 --> 00:05:52,450
and is set as if
in a small park,

89
00:05:52,450 --> 00:05:56,620
with winding lanes
and tall trees.

90
00:05:56,620 --> 00:05:59,860
Small, house-like boxes
dotted the grounds,

91
00:05:59,860 --> 00:06:03,130
and I asked my guide
what they were.

92
00:06:03,130 --> 00:06:07,210
In these, the vicious dogs
of the camp were housed.

93

00:06:07,210 --> 00:06:09,100

These dogs were
especially trained

94

00:06:09,100 --> 00:06:13,570

to take part in the
torturing of the prisoners.

95

00:06:13,570 --> 00:06:17,230

"We did not visit the
other portions of the camp.

96

00:06:17,230 --> 00:06:20,500

We could see it well
through the barbed wire,

97

00:06:20,500 --> 00:06:23,560

and the former prisoners who
are being kept there, now

98

00:06:23,560 --> 00:06:25,600

for quarantine purposes.

99

00:06:25,600 --> 00:06:29,740

It resembles the camp at which
we are now stationed, Allach.

100

00:06:29,740 --> 00:06:32,680

And I am sure that the
same indescribable living

101

00:06:32,680 --> 00:06:35,590

conditions were present there.

102

00:06:35,590 --> 00:06:41,060

In the square of the main camp
area, The flags of America,

103

00:06:41,060 --> 00:06:44,230

Russia, Britain, and
France are now flying.

104

00:06:44,230 --> 00:06:47,170

Two American
evacuation hospitals

105

00:06:47,170 --> 00:06:49,810

are giving medical care to
the personnel of the camp.

106

00:06:49,810 --> 00:06:53,780

107

00:06:53,780 --> 00:06:57,350

"I have written of the patients
we are receiving here already.

108

00:06:57,350 --> 00:07:00,740

In our several days of
operation, three have died,

109

00:07:00,740 --> 00:07:02,720

and there will be many more.

110

00:07:02,720 --> 00:07:05,690

3/4 of them have tuberculosis.

111

00:07:05,690 --> 00:07:08,060

We are X-raying all
of them, not that we

112

00:07:08,060 --> 00:07:11,870

will be able to do anything
for those who have the disease.

113

00:07:11,870 --> 00:07:16,190

Sanatoria will be needed, but
to protect our own personnel

114

00:07:16,190 --> 00:07:18,950

and the non-infected patients.

115

00:07:18,950 --> 00:07:21,620

"There are many
cases far advanced

116
00:07:21,620 --> 00:07:24,680
which have only a few
months ahead of them.

117
00:07:24,680 --> 00:07:28,040
And of course, all are
severely malnourished,

118
00:07:28,040 --> 00:07:31,340
and many present the
classical signs and symptoms

119
00:07:31,340 --> 00:07:33,140
of vitamin deficiencies--

120
00:07:33,140 --> 00:07:34,820
textbook pictures.

121
00:07:34,820 --> 00:07:38,780
Almost all have severe diarrhea,
as the result of tuberculosis

122
00:07:38,780 --> 00:07:41,510
infection of the
gastrointestinal tract,

123
00:07:41,510 --> 00:07:45,740
or as part of the picture
of vitamin deficiency

124
00:07:45,740 --> 00:07:46,930
and malnutrition."

125
00:07:46,930 --> 00:07:50,070

126
00:07:50,070 --> 00:07:53,670
You described it
all, Dr. Tievsky.

127
00:07:53,670 --> 00:07:55,960

Nobody could do
better than this.

128
00:07:55,960 --> 00:07:58,680
And I wouldn't go in--

129
00:07:58,680 --> 00:08:00,400
you should describe
more about it.

130
00:08:00,400 --> 00:08:03,480
I would just like to
go into questions.

131
00:08:03,480 --> 00:08:07,530
When you saw these
very sick people--

132
00:08:07,530 --> 00:08:11,250
some people went through
six years of this suffering

133
00:08:11,250 --> 00:08:12,990
that you just described.

134
00:08:12,990 --> 00:08:16,050
Because for these people
didn't come just from Dachau.

135
00:08:16,050 --> 00:08:18,780
Many of them were in ghettos.

136
00:08:18,780 --> 00:08:21,660
They started the
war already in 1939.

137
00:08:21,660 --> 00:08:28,470
Did you as a doctor expect
these people to survive, live,

138
00:08:28,470 --> 00:08:34,049
and be mentally and physically
able to continue a normal life,

139
00:08:34,049 --> 00:08:37,299
to pick up a normal life?

140
00:08:37,299 --> 00:08:41,309
What surprised me was
a tremendous vitality

141
00:08:41,309 --> 00:08:45,540
of the human body, both
physically and psychologically.

142
00:08:45,540 --> 00:08:49,740
I was tremendously
surprised at this.

143
00:08:49,740 --> 00:08:53,580
According to the books that you
have learned many, many years

144
00:08:53,580 --> 00:08:57,630
to become a doctor, did
you ever find a place

145
00:08:57,630 --> 00:09:01,800
that they would describe that a
person, after going through all

146
00:09:01,800 --> 00:09:03,900
this, will be normal--

147
00:09:03,900 --> 00:09:07,540
maybe scarred inside, but
normal, and function normal?

148
00:09:07,540 --> 00:09:10,760

149
00:09:10,760 --> 00:09:20,900
There is no-- there is no way to
make this kind of a comparison,

150

00:09:20,900 --> 00:09:26,580
because there has never been
this kind of a situation.

151
00:09:26,580 --> 00:09:33,300
Again, I say that the vitality
and the resiliency of the human

152
00:09:33,300 --> 00:09:35,430
being amazed me.

153
00:09:35,430 --> 00:09:46,000
In a matter of a few days, or a
week, or two weeks, with food--

154
00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:51,100
and we had to give them
liquid food at first--

155
00:09:51,100 --> 00:09:55,410
but with food, and
most importantly

156
00:09:55,410 --> 00:10:03,210
with tender loving care, we saw
people just blossom so quickly.

157
00:10:03,210 --> 00:10:09,270
It was-- I think the nursing
of the nurses was so wonderful.

158
00:10:09,270 --> 00:10:11,790
The doctors were so wonderful.

159
00:10:11,790 --> 00:10:14,340
The technical personnel
were so wonderful.

160
00:10:14,340 --> 00:10:18,030
And the response of the
people to this, I think,

161
00:10:18,030 --> 00:10:21,920

was as important as
the food that they got.

162
00:10:21,920 --> 00:10:24,840
You see, as a
survivor, I saw this.

163
00:10:24,840 --> 00:10:29,280
As a survivor, I appreciated
that every person,

164
00:10:29,280 --> 00:10:34,560
medical person, was happy
to save another human being.

165
00:10:34,560 --> 00:10:40,050
Just a few weeks before
that, people didn't count.

166
00:10:40,050 --> 00:10:43,530
100,000s, they didn't care,
the Germans, for the people.

167
00:10:43,530 --> 00:10:48,030
That's why the liberation was so
wonderful-- to see that there's

168
00:10:48,030 --> 00:10:51,120
still a world, a free
world, coming in,

169
00:10:51,120 --> 00:10:53,730
that they care
for somebody else,

170
00:10:53,730 --> 00:10:56,340
that they have this
compassion to deal

171
00:10:56,340 --> 00:10:59,920
with this, what was going on.

172
00:10:59,920 --> 00:11:03,600

I also would like to
speak to you and ask you,

173
00:11:03,600 --> 00:11:09,540
you meeting a lot of survivors
of concentration camps

174
00:11:09,540 --> 00:11:17,450
in World War II, how
is their mental state?

175
00:11:17,450 --> 00:11:21,260
I think that they function
tremendously well.

176
00:11:21,260 --> 00:11:26,090
I know many of them,
many who have attained

177
00:11:26,090 --> 00:11:31,610
a significant position in this
community in Washington D.C.

178
00:11:31,610 --> 00:11:32,850
where I live.

179
00:11:32,850 --> 00:11:37,160
I know many of them
throughout the country.

180
00:11:37,160 --> 00:11:40,610
And they have done
exceptionally well.

181
00:11:40,610 --> 00:11:44,990
There are some, of
course, who have problems.

182
00:11:44,990 --> 00:11:49,250
But in the main, I
would say that I come

183
00:11:49,250 --> 00:11:52,040

back to what I said before.

184
00:11:52,040 --> 00:11:56,960
The vitality and the resiliency
of the human body and mind

185
00:11:56,960 --> 00:12:00,110
is a wonderful thing to behold.

186
00:12:00,110 --> 00:12:05,180
Now, I would like also as a
doctor, an educated person,

187
00:12:05,180 --> 00:12:09,290
to ask you, how do you account--

188
00:12:09,290 --> 00:12:12,440
when we speak here
about people--

189
00:12:12,440 --> 00:12:16,220
I'm here since 1946--

190
00:12:16,220 --> 00:12:23,780
and we see crime, dope
addiction, and it's--

191
00:12:23,780 --> 00:12:28,550
I always hear because
the people were

192
00:12:28,550 --> 00:12:32,900
in a bad environment,
because the people didn't

193
00:12:32,900 --> 00:12:35,930
have a good start.

194
00:12:35,930 --> 00:12:40,430
How do you account for
all these young people,

195

00:12:40,430 --> 00:12:46,820
like myself, that started
the War 10 years, 12, 13--

196
00:12:46,820 --> 00:12:52,370
six years of all this,
of this killing--

197
00:12:52,370 --> 00:12:56,720
how do you account that these
people didn't become criminals?

198
00:12:56,720 --> 00:12:59,450
I will answer your
question with a story.

199
00:12:59,450 --> 00:13:04,070

200
00:13:04,070 --> 00:13:07,220
In past years, patients
who came into my office

201
00:13:07,220 --> 00:13:12,170
with a tattoo on their
arm, I asked what camp,

202
00:13:12,170 --> 00:13:14,000
what lager were you in?

203
00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:17,810
One day, a man said, Allach.

204
00:13:17,810 --> 00:13:21,920
We both blanched.

205
00:13:21,920 --> 00:13:27,800
I invited him, his wife,
to our home for Shabbat.

206
00:13:27,800 --> 00:13:30,830
And then he told me a story.

207

00:13:30,830 --> 00:13:36,890

He said, the day
that the guards fled

208

00:13:36,890 --> 00:13:43,670

Allach, he and some of the
others left, found a car,

209

00:13:43,670 --> 00:13:44,900

commandeered the car.

210

00:13:44,900 --> 00:13:46,970

And as they were
driving down the road,

211

00:13:46,970 --> 00:13:50,630

they saw the commandant
of the camp walking.

212

00:13:50,630 --> 00:13:53,960

They seized him and
put him in the car.

213

00:13:53,960 --> 00:13:56,960

And then they drove
through the Schwarzwald,

214

00:13:56,960 --> 00:13:58,730

through the Black Forest.

215

00:13:58,730 --> 00:14:03,770

And as they drove, they
began discussing in what way

216

00:14:03,770 --> 00:14:08,060

they could kill him to prolong
his agony for the greatest

217

00:14:08,060 --> 00:14:09,560

length of time.

218

00:14:09,560 --> 00:14:11,300

And as they drove
through the night,

219
00:14:11,300 --> 00:14:14,540
they decided just to kill him.

220
00:14:14,540 --> 00:14:19,940
And as dawn came, they decided
that if they killed him,

221
00:14:19,940 --> 00:14:23,600
they would be no
better than the Nazis.

222
00:14:23,600 --> 00:14:26,690
And they turned him
over to the authorities.

223
00:14:26,690 --> 00:14:31,940
And the answer to that question
is our Judaic tradition.

224
00:14:31,940 --> 00:14:37,820
We have a tradition that
is almost 4,000 years old.

225
00:14:37,820 --> 00:14:42,350
And this tradition is
burned into our soul.

226
00:14:42,350 --> 00:14:46,730
And that is why we have
been able to survive

227
00:14:46,730 --> 00:14:52,460
through all types of tortures,
humiliations, cruelties,

228
00:14:52,460 --> 00:14:55,910
expulsions, and we have
not become criminals.

229
00:14:55,910 --> 00:14:58,070

And that is the answer
to your question.

230
00:14:58,070 --> 00:15:03,200
Doctor, could you tell me, what
was your feeling, as a Jew,

231
00:15:03,200 --> 00:15:07,395
coming into a camp that the
inmates were mostly Jewish?

232
00:15:07,395 --> 00:15:10,650

233
00:15:10,650 --> 00:15:12,950
Let me answer that
with another story.

234
00:15:12,950 --> 00:15:16,760

235
00:15:16,760 --> 00:15:19,140
I walked into my ward one day.

236
00:15:19,140 --> 00:15:24,440
And I said to an enlisted man
who is Jewish, shalom aleichem.

237
00:15:24,440 --> 00:15:27,230
And he said, aleichem shalom.

238
00:15:27,230 --> 00:15:30,200
And all of the
patients applauded.

239
00:15:30,200 --> 00:15:34,225
And I thought, well, maybe they
didn't know that I was Jewish.

240
00:15:34,225 --> 00:15:37,040

241

00:15:37,040 --> 00:15:42,040
But years later, someone pointed
out to me, that may have been,

242
00:15:42,040 --> 00:15:44,080
but they applauded
because you were

243
00:15:44,080 --> 00:15:48,180
a free Jew all of this time.

244
00:15:48,180 --> 00:15:51,000
And my feeling to them being
Jewish, there was a bond.

245
00:15:51,000 --> 00:15:52,200
Of course there was a bond.

246
00:15:52,200 --> 00:15:54,900
There had to be a bond.

247
00:15:54,900 --> 00:15:57,540
It was tremendous-- it would
have been traumatic enough

248
00:15:57,540 --> 00:15:59,430
if these had not been Jews.

249
00:15:59,430 --> 00:16:04,530
But it was tenfold traumatic
because they were Jews.

250
00:16:04,530 --> 00:16:07,350
Now, I would like to ask
you another question.

251
00:16:07,350 --> 00:16:13,350
Being a doctor, how did you
deal with helping the Germans?

252
00:16:13,350 --> 00:16:16,350
I'm sure there were sick Germans
that you had to take care of.

253
00:16:16,350 --> 00:16:17,280
Would you answer this?

254
00:16:17,280 --> 00:16:21,490
Well, this is part
of our profession.

255
00:16:21,490 --> 00:16:27,930
We have to take care of the sick
and the injured, regardless--

256
00:16:27,930 --> 00:16:29,490
regardless.

257
00:16:29,490 --> 00:16:34,170
If an SS officer would
have come under my care,

258
00:16:34,170 --> 00:16:38,790
I would have had great
emotional problems.

259
00:16:38,790 --> 00:16:42,360
But I could not
have abandoned him.

260
00:16:42,360 --> 00:16:44,190
I could not have done it.

261
00:16:44,190 --> 00:16:47,490
Did you come across Germans?

262
00:16:47,490 --> 00:16:47,990
Yes.

263
00:16:47,990 --> 00:16:50,990
After, in Dachau when
you stayed there?

264
00:16:50,990 --> 00:16:52,340
How long did you stay in--

265
00:16:52,340 --> 00:16:54,690
Six weeks.

266
00:16:54,690 --> 00:16:59,070
I walked the streets of the
pleasant, pretty little village

267
00:16:59,070 --> 00:17:00,300
of Dachau.

268
00:17:00,300 --> 00:17:06,369
And the sky was blue, and the
sun shone, and the birds sang.

269
00:17:06,369 --> 00:17:09,130
And I looked at the people
walking in the street,

270
00:17:09,130 --> 00:17:13,960
at the BÃ¼rgers with their wives,
on a Sunday while dressed.

271
00:17:13,960 --> 00:17:19,540
And I could smell the
smell of the death camp.

272
00:17:19,540 --> 00:17:23,030
And I said to myself,
how can this be?

273
00:17:23,030 --> 00:17:27,520
How can these people
walk around like this,

274
00:17:27,520 --> 00:17:35,860
live like this, exist in this
world, and yet they know--

275
00:17:35,860 --> 00:17:42,910
they have to know that there
is death just two miles away?

276

00:17:42,910 --> 00:17:44,590

Also another
question that I would

277

00:17:44,590 --> 00:17:47,950

like to know, when you
were in the United States,

278

00:17:47,950 --> 00:17:50,170

before you came
to Europe, did you

279

00:17:50,170 --> 00:17:53,320

know what's going on in
Europe with the concentration

280

00:17:53,320 --> 00:17:55,480

camps, labor camps, ghettos?

281

00:17:55,480 --> 00:17:58,720

I knew that there were
concentration camps.

282

00:17:58,720 --> 00:18:00,130

But no one knew.

283

00:18:00,130 --> 00:18:02,530

All we knew that--

284

00:18:02,530 --> 00:18:07,600

all we knew was that Jews were
being herded into concentration

285

00:18:07,600 --> 00:18:09,340

camps.

286

00:18:09,340 --> 00:18:15,070

About extermination camps,
about how the Jews were treated,

287

00:18:15,070 --> 00:18:17,590

we knew that they were

being brutally treated.

288

00:18:17,590 --> 00:18:19,330

But beyond that,
we did not know.

289

00:18:19,330 --> 00:18:21,055

There was no
psychological preparation,

290

00:18:21,055 --> 00:18:22,270

if that is what you mean.

291

00:18:22,270 --> 00:18:23,320

This is what I
would like to know.

292

00:18:23,320 --> 00:18:24,640

There was no psychological
preparation--

293

00:18:24,640 --> 00:18:26,920

Did they lecture you before
you entered to the camp?

294

00:18:26,920 --> 00:18:28,660

Was this the only
camp you liberated?

295

00:18:28,660 --> 00:18:29,320

Yes.

296

00:18:29,320 --> 00:18:29,830

Yes.

297

00:18:29,830 --> 00:18:31,620

No, there was no lecture.

298

00:18:31,620 --> 00:18:33,640

Did they prepare you
for this disaster?

299

00:18:33,640 --> 00:18:34,750

No, no.

300

00:18:34,750 --> 00:18:37,120

This was a military activity.

301

00:18:37,120 --> 00:18:39,160

We were ordered to go there.

302

00:18:39,160 --> 00:18:41,230

Nobody-- the commanding
officer didn't

303

00:18:41,230 --> 00:18:43,840

know what we were going to see.

304

00:18:43,840 --> 00:18:47,020

We didn't know what
we were going to see.

305

00:18:47,020 --> 00:18:49,000

You see, the
question is always we

306

00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:52,900

waited so long to be liberated.

307

00:18:52,900 --> 00:18:57,130

We also-- we're all
just very surprised

308

00:18:57,130 --> 00:19:00,490

that nobody destroyed Auschwitz.

309

00:19:00,490 --> 00:19:04,270

Nobody destroyed
Buchenwald, Dachau.

310

00:19:04,270 --> 00:19:05,210

Why?

311

00:19:05,210 --> 00:19:07,150

You had maps.

312

00:19:07,150 --> 00:19:08,950

Why was it that--

313

00:19:08,950 --> 00:19:11,200

we didn't care to die.

314

00:19:11,200 --> 00:19:15,580

We wanted to die, just that we
wanted they should die, too.

315

00:19:15,580 --> 00:19:21,610

We should-- at least if you
would disrupt this bringing in.

316

00:19:21,610 --> 00:19:24,670

Because Hitler concentrated
constantly on these

317

00:19:24,670 --> 00:19:30,490

trains to drag the slave labor,
the people, the prisoners,

318

00:19:30,490 --> 00:19:33,940

the Jews mainly, from
one camp to the other.

319

00:19:33,940 --> 00:19:36,760

Why didn't anybody do something?

320

00:19:36,760 --> 00:19:39,490

We did not know.

321

00:19:39,490 --> 00:19:46,330

The knowledge of the death camps
was here in the United States

322

00:19:46,330 --> 00:19:52,940

in the President's office, and
the Secretary of State in 1944.

323

00:19:52,940 --> 00:19:57,560

Jan Karski-- are you
familiar with his name?

324

00:19:57,560 --> 00:20:04,160

Jan Karski was a Polish
courier for the underground.

325

00:20:04,160 --> 00:20:07,730

He was also a courier
for the Jews of Poland.

326

00:20:07,730 --> 00:20:10,490

327

00:20:10,490 --> 00:20:18,130

And he told me and a
group that he brought--

328

00:20:18,130 --> 00:20:22,870

he was-- first of all,
he smuggled himself

329

00:20:22,870 --> 00:20:27,700

into a small extermination
camp in Estonia.

330

00:20:27,700 --> 00:20:32,000

And he saw with his own
eyes the gas chambers.

331

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:35,690

And he said, I could stand
it for only 15 minutes.

332

00:20:35,690 --> 00:20:38,510

He had to leave.

333

00:20:38,510 --> 00:20:41,690

He brought-- and I
should say he was

334

00:20:41,690 --> 00:20:47,390

sent to America with
photographs and documentation

335
00:20:47,390 --> 00:20:50,970
of the extermination camps.

336
00:20:50,970 --> 00:20:57,650
And he produced these to
the highest authorities.

337
00:20:57,650 --> 00:21:01,910
He told me of his experience
with Felix Frankfurter,

338
00:21:01,910 --> 00:21:05,110
Chief Justice Frankfurter.

339
00:21:05,110 --> 00:21:07,840
He told him, I have
come to tell you

340
00:21:07,840 --> 00:21:11,260
about the extermination
of German Jewry.

341
00:21:11,260 --> 00:21:14,110
And Frankfurter said,
I do not believe you.

342
00:21:14,110 --> 00:21:17,050
He said, I have the documents
and the photographs.

343
00:21:17,050 --> 00:21:18,430
And he looked at them.

344
00:21:18,430 --> 00:21:21,463
And he said, do not
show me anymore.

345
00:21:21,463 --> 00:21:24,710

346

00:21:24,710 --> 00:21:28,580

The news, the knowledge
was suppressed

347

00:21:28,580 --> 00:21:33,500

because it was feared that it
might impede the war effort,

348

00:21:33,500 --> 00:21:34,970

I am told.

349

00:21:34,970 --> 00:21:38,150

I do not know why
it was suppressed.

350

00:21:38,150 --> 00:21:43,010

So we did not know
here, in this country.

351

00:21:43,010 --> 00:21:46,520

The Jewish community
did not know.

352

00:21:46,520 --> 00:21:49,190

Didn't believe, because
I understand the New York

353

00:21:49,190 --> 00:21:51,500

Times had articles.

354

00:21:51,500 --> 00:21:55,400

The New York Times articles--

355

00:21:55,400 --> 00:21:57,980

The Time magazine came
out with articles.

356

00:21:57,980 --> 00:22:03,230

They-- these articles, I will
have to quote the New York

357

00:22:03,230 --> 00:22:04,340

Times correspondent.

358

00:22:04,340 --> 00:22:10,370

When he saw his first
extermination camp, he wrote--

359

00:22:10,370 --> 00:22:12,110

Which year was this?

360

00:22:12,110 --> 00:22:13,670

1945.

361

00:22:13,670 --> 00:22:15,500

New York Times
articles before that

362

00:22:15,500 --> 00:22:18,020

were about concentration camps.

363

00:22:18,020 --> 00:22:20,720

But they did not--

364

00:22:20,720 --> 00:22:23,480

they did not know the extent.

365

00:22:23,480 --> 00:22:27,980

They did not know the
enormity of this crime.

366

00:22:27,980 --> 00:22:30,780

They did not know the abyss.

367

00:22:30,780 --> 00:22:35,690

You see, because this
was the outcry of ours.

368

00:22:35,690 --> 00:22:40,460

We knew that, in the
ghetto, that many people

369

00:22:40,460 --> 00:22:44,270

could have been saved if

Russia wouldn't have stayed

370

00:22:44,270 --> 00:22:47,450
at the Vizsla six months.

371

00:22:47,450 --> 00:22:53,340
Because this was the time when
we were sent to Auschwitz.

372

00:22:53,340 --> 00:22:54,810
And--

373

00:22:54,810 --> 00:22:56,940
The world didn't do anything.

374

00:22:56,940 --> 00:22:59,400
Auschwitz was not bombed--

375

00:22:59,400 --> 00:22:59,940
No.

376

00:22:59,940 --> 00:23:05,010
--because it was felt not to be
a military target by Franklin

377

00:23:05,010 --> 00:23:07,230
Roosevelt.

378

00:23:07,230 --> 00:23:09,130
Well, I can't agree with him.

379

00:23:09,130 --> 00:23:11,680
He was a great President.

380

00:23:11,680 --> 00:23:15,270
But he could have
done, I think, better

381

00:23:15,270 --> 00:23:18,300
for people that were in prisons.

382

00:23:18,300 --> 00:23:24,540

But he also refused his
wife Eleanor's request

383

00:23:24,540 --> 00:23:28,050

for the admission of
1,500 Jewish children

384

00:23:28,050 --> 00:23:31,570

to the United States.

385

00:23:31,570 --> 00:23:35,320

Was this the time of the
ship that came from--

386

00:23:35,320 --> 00:23:37,240

in the beginning?

387

00:23:37,240 --> 00:23:38,890

I don't recall the exact date.

388

00:23:38,890 --> 00:23:39,970

The St. Louis?

389

00:23:39,970 --> 00:23:41,750

No, I don't know.

390

00:23:41,750 --> 00:23:43,150

I don't know the exact date.

391

00:23:43,150 --> 00:23:44,260

But I do know--

392

00:23:44,260 --> 00:23:46,820

393

00:23:46,820 --> 00:23:48,590

let me say this.

394

00:23:48,590 --> 00:23:54,710

I think we had, fundamentally,
a political problem here.

395

00:23:54,710 --> 00:23:59,210

The Jewish vote was in
Franklin Roosevelt's pocket.

396

00:23:59,210 --> 00:24:02,270

99% of Jews voted for--

397

00:24:02,270 --> 00:24:06,342

Why wasn't there any resistance,
strike, demonstration for us?

398

00:24:06,342 --> 00:24:07,550

Wait a minute, wait a minute.

399

00:24:07,550 --> 00:24:08,570

Wait a minute now.

400

00:24:08,570 --> 00:24:13,400

I'm talking now in terms
of the Depression years.

401

00:24:13,400 --> 00:24:16,610

I'm talking in terms of
a terrible depression

402

00:24:16,610 --> 00:24:17,990

in this country.

403

00:24:17,990 --> 00:24:22,830

I'm talking in terms of
a President who came--

404

00:24:22,830 --> 00:24:25,430

of a country where
banks were closing,

405

00:24:25,430 --> 00:24:28,850

of people who were
unemployed, of people of where

406

00:24:28,850 --> 00:24:30,620

there were bread lines.

407

00:24:30,620 --> 00:24:32,540

There were headlines
in the paper

408

00:24:32,540 --> 00:24:35,490

of a remote war in Europe.

409

00:24:35,490 --> 00:24:39,320

Remember, we had our problems
with the American Firsters,

410

00:24:39,320 --> 00:24:43,670

who wanted to have nothing to do
with involvement in Europe, who

411

00:24:43,670 --> 00:24:44,940

wanted to keep us out of war.

412

00:24:44,940 --> 00:24:47,480

We had a terrible
division in this country.

413

00:24:47,480 --> 00:24:48,520

I know.

414

00:24:48,520 --> 00:24:52,280

I heard about it,
including Joseph Kennedy,

415

00:24:52,280 --> 00:24:54,990

President Kennedy's father.

416

00:24:54,990 --> 00:24:55,490

Right.

417

00:24:55,490 --> 00:24:57,470

Jews are liberals.

418

00:24:57,470 --> 00:25:00,050

Franklin Roosevelt was

a liberal who proposed

419

00:25:00,050 --> 00:25:02,300

liberal social programs.

420

00:25:02,300 --> 00:25:07,490

And they voted for Roosevelt.

A politician is a politician.

421

00:25:07,490 --> 00:25:11,510

If he had not had their

votes, or half of their votes,

422

00:25:11,510 --> 00:25:13,650

perhaps that would

have made a difference.

423

00:25:13,650 --> 00:25:15,140

I don't know.

424

00:25:15,140 --> 00:25:18,050

You see, as a survivor,

and as a person

425

00:25:18,050 --> 00:25:21,620

that lost most of

the family in Europe,

426

00:25:21,620 --> 00:25:27,800

I feel it was an outrage that

the whole world, nobody wanted

427

00:25:27,800 --> 00:25:29,390

to take the Jews in.

428

00:25:29,390 --> 00:25:33,380

The Germans claimed, if nobody

wanted you, why should we?

429

00:25:33,380 --> 00:25:35,910

430

00:25:35,910 --> 00:25:41,010
All right, I will answer
that by saying this--

431
00:25:41,010 --> 00:25:57,880
that in the years 1942 to 1945,
in Christian Western world,

432
00:25:57,880 --> 00:25:58,930
this happened.

433
00:25:58,930 --> 00:26:02,200

434
00:26:02,200 --> 00:26:06,760
No country would
admit the Jews--

435
00:26:06,760 --> 00:26:09,001
no country.

436
00:26:09,001 --> 00:26:12,610
Anti-Semitism had
been in existence

437
00:26:12,610 --> 00:26:17,100
for 2000 years almost.

438
00:26:17,100 --> 00:26:20,300
This was anti-Semitism.

439
00:26:20,300 --> 00:26:23,040
You think this was a part--

440
00:26:23,040 --> 00:26:24,150
a role that played?

441
00:26:24,150 --> 00:26:25,230
This was anti-Semitism?

442
00:26:25,230 --> 00:26:26,340
There is no question.

443
00:26:26,340 --> 00:26:30,600
There is no question
anti-Semitism has its roots,

444
00:26:30,600 --> 00:26:34,910
unfortunately, in Christianity.

445
00:26:34,910 --> 00:26:39,560
They blamed us for the
death of their Lord.

446
00:26:39,560 --> 00:26:45,030
But I will say this,
the late Pope John

447
00:26:45,030 --> 00:26:50,820
said anti-Semitism
is another thorn

448
00:26:50,820 --> 00:26:54,720
in the bleeding body of Christ.

449
00:26:54,720 --> 00:26:58,350
That was a pope that said this.

450
00:26:58,350 --> 00:27:01,380
So there is hope.

451
00:27:01,380 --> 00:27:09,470
But I will tell you another
story, if I have time.

452
00:27:09,470 --> 00:27:14,420

453
00:27:14,420 --> 00:27:23,670
I was at Dachau, and a young
enlisted man came to my tent.

454
00:27:23,670 --> 00:27:25,440
And he said, I have

to speak to you.

455

00:27:25,440 --> 00:27:29,130

And he came in, and
he was weeping--

456

00:27:29,130 --> 00:27:30,660

crying tears.

457

00:27:30,660 --> 00:27:33,820

And I said, what's the matter?

458

00:27:33,820 --> 00:27:39,200

He said-- and he was a
Jewish enlisted man--

459

00:27:39,200 --> 00:27:44,810

he said the men in my squad
tent are Jew-baiting me.

460

00:27:44,810 --> 00:27:47,210

This was at Dachau.

461

00:27:47,210 --> 00:27:53,460

And every one of these men had
seen the patients, had seen--

462

00:27:53,460 --> 00:27:55,830

many of them had seen the dead.

463

00:27:55,830 --> 00:27:59,850

And when that young
Jewish boy told me

464

00:27:59,850 --> 00:28:03,450

that the Christians
were Jew-baiting him,

465

00:28:03,450 --> 00:28:10,350

then I knew that this
would not-- anti-Semitism

466

00:28:10,350 --> 00:28:15,030
would not end because
of the Holocaust.

467
00:28:15,030 --> 00:28:21,390
May I ask you, in your opinion,
did the world learn a lesson?

468
00:28:21,390 --> 00:28:29,050
Seeing what you saw, do you
think this could happen again?

469
00:28:29,050 --> 00:28:32,060
I do not think the
world learned a lesson.

470
00:28:32,060 --> 00:28:34,330
I think it could happen again.

471
00:28:34,330 --> 00:28:37,300
Any place in the world?

472
00:28:37,300 --> 00:28:39,310
Let me tell you why I say this.

473
00:28:39,310 --> 00:28:43,030

474
00:28:43,030 --> 00:28:47,500
There is a Swiss dramatist
by the name of Durrenmatt.

475
00:28:47,500 --> 00:28:53,200
And he wrote a play
called The Visit.

476
00:28:53,200 --> 00:28:57,250
The play is centered
in central Europe.

477
00:28:57,250 --> 00:29:02,500
It is about a man who is a
great favorite in the town

478
00:29:02,500 --> 00:29:03,970
and is to be elected mayor.

479
00:29:03,970 --> 00:29:07,050

480
00:29:07,050 --> 00:29:11,040
And a wealthy woman
comes back to the town

481
00:29:11,040 --> 00:29:15,900
who lived there at one time,
who had been wronged by him.

482
00:29:15,900 --> 00:29:19,740
And suddenly, in this
impoverished town,

483
00:29:19,740 --> 00:29:22,500
money begins to flow.

484
00:29:22,500 --> 00:29:29,190
And very gradually, the people
who loved this young man

485
00:29:29,190 --> 00:29:31,320
begin looking at
him differently.

486
00:29:31,320 --> 00:29:34,560
And then she offers
each one of them

487
00:29:34,560 --> 00:29:38,900
a large sum of money
if they will kill him.

488
00:29:38,900 --> 00:29:41,540
And they kill him.

489
00:29:41,540 --> 00:29:47,130

This, in microcosm, is
what happened to the Jews

490
00:29:47,130 --> 00:29:49,300
in Germany.

491
00:29:49,300 --> 00:29:52,405
Second, the
psychological aspect--

492
00:29:52,405 --> 00:29:56,520

493
00:29:56,520 --> 00:30:05,280
there is a psychologist who
did a very famous experiment.

494
00:30:05,280 --> 00:30:09,850

495
00:30:09,850 --> 00:30:15,560
"Obedience to Authority" was
the name of the experiment.

496
00:30:15,560 --> 00:30:23,280
And he had an actor strapped
into a chair, such as this,

497
00:30:23,280 --> 00:30:26,130
with electrodes.

498
00:30:26,130 --> 00:30:30,390
And he had volunteers
give the actor

499
00:30:30,390 --> 00:30:37,980
varying degrees of electrical
shock until an almost lethal--

500
00:30:37,980 --> 00:30:40,350
theoretically lethal
point was reached,

501

00:30:40,350 --> 00:30:44,250

and the actor reacted
tremendously with pain.

502

00:30:44,250 --> 00:30:48,540

And by the authority of
the individual who was

503

00:30:48,540 --> 00:30:53,220

directing this, he was able--

504

00:30:53,220 --> 00:30:59,400

he was able to get almost
every person to turn

505

00:30:59,400 --> 00:31:01,590

the dial to the lethal point.

506

00:31:01,590 --> 00:31:05,400

He worked with many
different groups.

507

00:31:05,400 --> 00:31:07,740

He began with a student group.

508

00:31:07,740 --> 00:31:10,500

Then, he advertised in
a newspaper for groups.

509

00:31:10,500 --> 00:31:13,820

And he worked even
with professionals.

510

00:31:13,820 --> 00:31:17,270

And he found that
there is the capacity

511

00:31:17,270 --> 00:31:23,990

in human beings-- there was only
one who refused, a minister.

512

00:31:23,990 --> 00:31:27,110

There is the capacity in
human beings for cruelty

513
00:31:27,110 --> 00:31:29,360
under the proper conditions.

514
00:31:29,360 --> 00:31:30,700
We have very little time.

515
00:31:30,700 --> 00:31:33,800
So I would like to ask
you my last question.

516
00:31:33,800 --> 00:31:44,000
And this is, was what you saw
after the war, being in Dachau,

517
00:31:44,000 --> 00:31:50,180
did this change your thinking,
your way of life, your person?

518
00:31:50,180 --> 00:31:53,230
What effect did this have
on your personal life?

519
00:31:53,230 --> 00:31:55,820

520
00:31:55,820 --> 00:32:00,380
It reinforced my Judaic feeling.

521
00:32:00,380 --> 00:32:02,370
I am very committed.

522
00:32:02,370 --> 00:32:07,640
I am active in the
leadership in this community.

523
00:32:07,640 --> 00:32:10,070
I am a Zionist.

524
00:32:10,070 --> 00:32:11,825

I have been to
Israel many times.

525
00:32:11,825 --> 00:32:17,620

526
00:32:17,620 --> 00:32:24,960
Aside from that, I cannot say
that it consciously affected

527
00:32:24,960 --> 00:32:26,530
my personal life.

528
00:32:26,530 --> 00:32:30,540
I repressed these
memories for 35 years.

529
00:32:30,540 --> 00:32:34,930
When they come up, I
am quite disturbed.

530
00:32:34,930 --> 00:32:37,945
I am sleepless, and I will
not sleep well tonight.

531
00:32:37,945 --> 00:32:41,430

532
00:32:41,430 --> 00:32:44,060
I want to say thank
you for your interview.

533
00:32:44,060 --> 00:32:45,090
It was a pleasure.

534
00:32:45,090 --> 00:32:45,937
Thank you.

535
00:32:45,937 --> 00:32:48,740
OK, [INAUDIBLE] time out.

536
00:32:48,740 --> 00:32:51,410

Thank you so much.

537

00:32:51,410 --> 00:32:53,180

How was it?

538

00:32:53,180 --> 00:32:56,530

[AUDIO OUT]

539

00:32:56,530 --> 00:33:21,000